

REMOVING YOUR TATTOO

Permanent tattoos can be hard and painful to remove. It may take several treatments that cost a lot of money. Talk to your doctor about your options. Remember:

- You may not be able to completely remove your tattoo.
- You could get a scar when you remove your tattoo.



Laser Removal

The FDA approves certain laser devices to remove tattoos. Lighter colors such as yellow, green, and red are more difficult to remove than darker colors such as dark blue and black. It may take 6-10 treatments to remove a tattoo. Some side effects may include bleeding, redness or soreness.

Surgery

Tattoos can sometimes be removed by cutting out the tattooed skin then sewing the skin back together. Other times, the skin can be sanded down to remove the tattoo.

Ointments and Creams

The FDA does not approve tattoo removal ointments and creams or do-it-yourself tattoo removal kits. These products may cause skin rashes, burns or scars.

TATTOOS and PERMANENT MAKE-UP



Office of
Women's
Health

To get other women's health materials, go to:
www.fda.gov/womens

TAKE TIME TO CARE... For yourself, for those who need you.





TATTOO RISKS

Problems can happen.

- Infections and serious illness, like HIV or hepatitis, from unclean tattoo tools, practices, or products
- Allergic reactions to the inks or stains can cause skin problems, such as rashes
- Other skin problems like increased chance of sunburn, bumps, redness, or scarring
- Swelling and burning of the tattoo when you get an MRI test
- Pain and high costs if you want to remove a permanent tattoo

Contact your state or local health department for tattoo safety information to reduce your risk. Tell your doctor about any tattoos you have before any medical procedure.

FDA'S ROLE

FDA—

- has not approved any inks for injecting into your skin.
- has not approved henna or hair dye for use on your skin. Some people have reported serious skin problems after using henna or black henna.
- does not regulate tattoo parlors.
- **does** monitor problems from tattoos and permanent make-up.

Report problems at: www.fda.gov/medwatch or 1-800-332-1088

Some women get tattoos for beauty, self-expression, or cultural events. Whatever your reason, know the facts before and after you get a tattoo. Permanent tattoos last a lifetime. Temporary tattoos may last up to 3-4 weeks. Sticker tattoos last hours to days.

TYPES OF TATTOOS

Permanent Tattoo

A needle inserts colored ink into your skin.

Permanent Make-Up

A needle inserts colored ink into your skin to look like eyeliner, lip liner, eyebrows or other make-up.

Henna

Plant dye called henna or mehndi is used to stain your skin.

Black Henna

Developed from henna, may contain hair dye or other dye to darken the stain and make it last longer.

'Sticker' Temporary Tattoo

A tattoo design is on a coated paper. It is put on your skin with water.